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# SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE NEWS

REGION 4

COMPRISING STATES OF LOUISIANA, ARKANSAS  
AND TEXAS, EXCEPT HIGH PLAINS AREA

REGIONAL OFFICE---FORT WORTH, TEXAS

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## UNDER SECRETARY WILSON VISITS ARKANSAS DISTRICTS

Following his appearance as one of the principal speakers at the meeting of the Texas Agricultural Workers' Association in Fort Worth on January 13, M. L. Wilson, Washington, D. C., Under Secretary of Agriculture departed for Arkansas where he inspected soil conservation work under way in two of the ten operating soil conservation districts in that state.

He spent the day, January 14, in the Mine Creek district with headquarters at Nashville and the following day in the Magazine district in the vicinity of Booneville.

In both districts Under Secretary Wilson was favorably impressed with the progress being made by farmers who are establishing complete and coordinated soil and water conservation programs on their lands. He inspected farms, talked to farmers and conferred with members of the District Board of Supervisors.

"The individual landowner and society share the responsibility of preserving our lands for future generations," Mr. Wilson said at Nashville. "Soil conservation districts provide the means for a close partnership and cooperation between farmers and organized agencies working together to control erosion.

"By joining together, farmers obtain the benefit that comes through organized effort. The result has been rapid strides toward wide-spread control of erosion on our agricultural lands," he said.

"I was impressed by the work that is being done in these two districts," he declared before leaving for Washington. He said there is an excellent spirit of cooperation being manifest by farmers in Arkansas districts. "This interest shows that efforts of state and federal agencies to assist farmers in erosion control work are appreciated and accepted by the farmers.

"The theory behind soil conservation is closely connected with the old English law covering the right of eminent domain. Although a person has title to land and 'owns' it, he should not let it waste away or lose its value in production, as an interest is maintained in the land by all other persons in the country," the Under Secretary explained.

"The district idea was originated so that conservation of the soil could be properly conducted. The districts program makes it possible for farmers to work together, discuss their problems, help each other and take advantage of advice and services offered by the government. I am well pleased with the progress that is being made in Arkansas along these lines and I am happy to say this state is one of the leaders in the nation in forming districts and getting conservation work done in them," he stated.

Mr. Wilson expressed a personal preference for small districts, since, he said, "they are true democracies." He said he believed that 300 farmers could come together for a meeting more often than 1,500. The small group would know more about the problems confronting their neighbors than would members of the larger group."

At Fort Worth Mr. Wilson, in discussing the "New Department of Agriculture," stressed the importance of soil conservation districts as a means of linking the Department of Agriculture with Federal, state and local units of government.

"Unquestionably, farm people, as well as state and federal officials, must all take part in the planning or program making process. We need, if our plans are to develop into workable programs, to base our decisions upon the combined judgments of experts, officials and farmers," he said.

"The Congress has provided most of the tools which we now feel we need for dealing comprehensively in a national way with our many-sided farm problem. But the farm problem, as we all know, is not wholly the kind of a national problem that can be solved by national efforts alone. It is a local problem and a state problem as well. Its solution will require a degree of cooperation that never before has been attained. It will require full and complete understanding and cooperation between local, state and federal people, not only in the planning phases, but in the action phases as well.



"We who have been working with agriculture from a national point of view pin many of our hopes for future agricultural adjustments on the evidence we now have that all units of government are assuming their full share of responsibility. For many of the state legislatures, like the national Congress, have been meeting their legislative responsibilities in their jurisdictions. The list of recent state enactments is impressive.

"The development of soil conservation districts legislation is perhaps the most significant of all."

"Twenty-six states have now passed such laws which provide for the creation of soil conservation districts to engage, under local initiative and guidance, in attacking the various land problems in a thoroughly democratic way.

"The Department believes that legislation of this type is appropriate for making complete cooperation possible between Federal, state and local units of government. The Department is now cooperating with 63 soil conservation districts in 19 states. Most of the cooperation, up to now, has been limited to work under cooperative agreements with the Soil Conservation Service. The Soil Conservation Act of 1935, which created that Service, authorized the Secretary of Agriculture, as a condition to extending the benefits under the Act to any state, to require the enactment of state laws providing suitably for the prevention of erosion.

"So it seems to us that the state soil conservation districts laws are destined to become more and more important as links between the Department of Agriculture and the states, as time goes on.

"This feeling on the part of the Department is reflected in a memorandum Secretary Wallace sent to the Chief of the Soil Conservation Service in December 1937. The Secretary wrote:

"I hope that the other agencies of the Department also will begin to move so that they may be able to work through the soil conservation districts. It seems to me that these districts in the future may be found to present an opportunity for the Department to unify a number of the different action programs which the Department is now authorized to carry on. Through the local soil conservation districts the Department should be able to assist farmers in formulating and executing comprehensive plans for bringing about wise land use. I think it is important, therefore, that the districts should not come to be looked upon as having significance only for the program of the Soil Conservation Service, but that they should be seen as local governmental units, organized democratically, functioning over properly bounded areas and possessing the necessary governmental power to enable them to carry on well-rounded agricultural programs. The districts need the help of most of the agencies of the Department and, in turn, they can help the Department as a whole to carry on more effectively the various programs it is administering," Mr. Wilson stated.

## WHAT IS A BLUESTEM MEADOW WORTH?

By Simon E. Wolff, Agronomist

A 40-acre native bluestem meadow on the Blackland farm of T. R. Jeffers, Ferris, Texas, has for many years successfully resisted erosion - but more than this it has annually returned Mr. Jeffers a profit of \$7.00 per acre. This represents a net annual return of 17 percent per acre from land valued at \$40 per acre.

A reconnaissance survey of this meadow made recently showed that it was located on slopes ranging from 4 to 15 percent and that there was a 50 percent basal cover, 60 percent of which was little bluestem grass.

An adjacent field having the same slope and soil types is badly eroded, washing and gullyng having taken place within a few years after the native sod was first broken.

Mr. Jeffers considers his native meadow too valuable to be broken for cultivation. He cuts his meadow once each year and has never baled less than a ton of hay to the acre. Furthermore, he has never sold this hay for less than \$10 per ton.

Allowing \$3.00 per ton for baling and hauling, the profit is \$7.00 per acre per year.

Of equal importance is the fact that the grass is binding the soil and preventing erosion.

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## DISTRICT ORGANIZATION IN LOUISIANA

Six public hearings are being conducted this month in two proposed state soil conservation districts in Louisiana--the Low- or East Red district and the Grand Coteau district.

Two supervisors for each of the seven districts already voted in have been appointed by the state soil conservation committee and notices have been posted for election of three additional members of the board of supervisors for each of the districts.

A referendum in the proposed Dugdemonia district was held on January 25 but results of the voting were not available as this issue of the Newsletter went to press.

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## WHAT IS A FARM?

(Briefed from Special Supplementary Study #5, issued by the Committee on Agricultural Cooperation of the National Association of Manufacturers.)

Printed in the  
"Cattleman" . . . January 1939

Of course it is a piece of land with necessary buildings and equipment adapted to production of one or more farm-grown commodities; there must be soil, not merely gravel, rocks and stones; it must be clear of other growth, in contrast to forested areas; it must have topography which permits farm operations, as distinct from steep hillsides and abrupt or precipitous slopes; and the elements must meet farm requirements - proper rainfall or water in season, rather than swamp or desert conditions, and temperature not too hot, not too cold or subject to uncertain frosts; other physical qualities are necessary features of a farm. The public holds a number of different conceptions of a farm.

1). A segment of natural resources which one may exploit or mine or deplete of its natural elements of fertility, sell these in the domestic or foreign markets, and claim the rewards as profits as one would from a mine. In other words, that it is merely an area to be exploited, mined and depleted.

2). A place which one may buy (perhaps on a narrow margin) and when it goes up or down in price sell it and make a capital gain or loss. In other words, as an opportunity for speculation.

3). A place where one may invest his savings and secure rent therefrom. In other words, as a place to earn the equivalent of interest.

4). A place of business where one may hope to produce raw materials at a low cost, sell them at a higher price, and pocket the difference as net gain. In other words, as a place for an enterpriser to combine the elements of land, labor and capital in such a manner as to produce a profit.

5). A place to work as owner, tenant or cropper and to sell the products in lieu of working for a salary or a wage; as a place to earn the equivalent of a salary or a wage.

In other words, some think of a farm primarily as a place to make the equivalent of rent, interest, profit, capital gains, salary and wage by investing, speculating, exploiting, managing and working.



Agriculture like that is not farming in its truest sense. Those conceptions imply over-capitalized, commercialized, industrialized, exploitative and speculative farming; and "if you do not get rich at it, then the Government may pass the necessary laws to make it profitable."

In Contrast, there are millions of farm operators who think of the farm:

- 1). As a home, a place to live, a place to rear a family and a place of peace and repose in old age rather than a place to retire from to some resort;
- 2). As a place to produce the choicest and most expensive share of the family living, in addition to shelter, fuel, water, flowers and shrubbery;
- 3). As a part of an enlightened community with its churches, schools, libraries, social centers, cooperative enterprises, local government, roads, etc.;
- 4). As a piece of the natural resources of the nation to protect, conserve, adapt to its proper use, diversify and rotate and not to exploit or deplete;
- 5). As an individually owned homestead to hand down from generation to generation and not to be bought and sold from year to year on a speculative market;
- 6). In many cases, as a place to live, where many of the more expensive basic necessities can be grown and from which some members of the family can go to useful, gainful, whole or part-time employment in neighboring cities, towns, villages, mines, quarries or factories;
- 7). Finally in most cases, as a place to produce much more than the family requirements so that on the one hand the multitudes of non-farmers in the towns and cities shall be provided for and on the other hand the farm operator may be able to buy those things not otherwise available on the farm.

With many the idea persists that farming is just one more business, to be dealt with only in terms of prices and income, wages and taxes, tariffs and foreign trade, exploitation and speculation. Others believe in more fundamental considerations, to the idea of the farm as a home, a place of security, a way of life.



## SOIL CONSERVATION ASSOCIATIONS ACTIVE

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More than 12,750 farmers who own or operate land within the boundaries of Region 4 of the Soil Conservation Service are members of 124 voluntary Soil and Water Conservation associations, a survey completed on January 1, 1939, showed.

Approximately 8,567 of the members have established, or are in the process of establishing complete and coordinated soil and water conservation farming systems on their lands with the assistance of technicians of the Soil Conservation Service. The rest of the members, 4,183 of them, have farms outside the demonstration areas of the Service, or for other reasons have not had the assistance of the Service. Yet all are interested in conservation farming and are doing what they can to install erosion control practices on their lands.

Members of the association are actively engaged in spreading knowledge of conservation farming methods to farms adjacent to demonstration areas. They are making cooperative purchases of seed to plant erosion control crops; are sponsoring field days and educational meetings and are interested in bringing school children, students of vocational agriculture, businessmen and groups of adult farmers to their farms to see conservation farming practices in operation.

Membership in the associations is distributed as follows:

	Region 4 Section of Texas	Arkansas	Louisiana
Associations	40	64	20
Number of Members	5,561	4,191	2,998
Number of Cooperator Members	3,909	2,852	1,806

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### TIME FOR WLW PROGRAM CHANGED

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Broadcast time for the Soil Conservation Service program heard each Saturday through the facilities of Station WLW, Cincinnati, Ohio, has been moved forward from 6 p.m. Eastern Standard Time to 6:45 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, according to an announcement made by F. E. Charles, regional information officer for Region 3 with headquarters at Dayton, Ohio. The program will be heard in Region 4 beginning at 5:45 p.m. (Central Standard Time.)

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## OKLAHOMA ADDED TO REGION 4

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Plans are now being drawn for bringing Soil Conservation Service activities in the state of Oklahoma, with the exception of the Panhandle, under the supervision of Region 4.

Under the plan for realignment of Soil Conservation Service regions in the Great Plains, announced by the Department of Agriculture early this month, Nebraska, Oklahoma and Kansas, the states which now comprise the Central Great Plains region (Region 7) will will be absorbed by Regions 4, 6 and 9.

Under the realignment, Oklahoma with the exception of the three Panhandle counties will be made a part of the South Central region which now includes Arkansas, Louisiana and all of Texas except the Panhandle. Headquarters will remain at Fort Worth.

This change in regional organization will add the following work units in Oklahoma to Region 4:

### Eight organized state soil conservation districts:

Arkansas-Verdigris, with headquarters at Broken Arrow  
 East Central, headquarters, Poteau  
 Kiamichi, headquarters, Hugo  
 Konawa, headquarters, Konawa  
 Garvin-Murray, headquarters, Wynnewood  
 North Fork--Red River, headquarters, Sayre  
 Upper Washita, headquarters, Harmon  
 McIntosh, headquarters, Eufala

### Nine demonstration projects:

Stillwater Creek, Stillwater  
 Pecos Creek, Muskogee  
 Elk Creek, Elk City  
 Camp Creek, Seiling  
 Tulip and Henry House Creeks, Ardmore  
 Little Washita, Chickasha  
 Taloka Creek, Stigler  
 Cow Creek, Duncan  
 Pryor Creek, Pryor

### Four Land Utilization projects:

Muskogee, Stillwater, Woodward, and Roger Mills

### Two water facilities projects:

Roger Mills County and Harmon County

Twenty-one Soil Conservation Service CCC Camps:

Duncan, Wynnwood, Idabel, Purcell, Rush Springs, Wetumka, Konawa, Guthrie, Morris, Wagoner, Pryor, Broken Arrow, Chocotah, Beley, Blackwell, Clinton, Hobart, Sentinel, Geary, Garber, Yukon.

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DISTRICT PROGRESS IN ARKANSAS

A report of votes cast in referenda by which three new state soil conservation districts recently were created in Arkansas shows that 3,106 farmers voted in favor of district establishment while only 35 cast negative votes.

The three new districts are:

Torre-Rouge Bedeaw, covering approximately 1,275,000 acres in parts of Hempstead, Nevada and LaFayette counties.

South Crowley Ridge, covering about 1,332,720 acres in parts of Lee, St. Francis and Cross counties.

Central Crowley Ridge, approximately 901,120 acres in parts of Poinsett and Craighead counties.

As of January 9, 1939, 958 farmers who own or operate 121,657 acres of land located in the ten operating districts in Arkansas had entered into cooperative agreements with their respective boards of supervisors and had started the establishment of complete and coordinated soil and water conservation farming programs on their lands.

Supervisors reported that individual farm plans for 100 other farms covering 11,829 acres had been completed and that farm plans were nearing completion on an additional 161 farms with a land area of 24,700 acres.

Conservation surveys had been completed on 1,219,284 acres of land in the ten districts as of January 15.

Supervisors also reported that 2,932 farmers had filed applications with their respective boards of supervisors asking assistance in installing erosion control practices on their farms.

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## WOODLANDS IN EROSION CONTROL

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By H. C. Mitchell, Head  
Woodland Management Section  
Region 4

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The effectiveness of woodlands in preventing soil erosion and holding back flood waters is strikingly illustrated in the 178 acres of woods on the 278-acre farm of Senator John L. Wilson near Hope, Arkansas.

This tract of woodland has not been grazed or burned in recent years and as a result the ground is covered with a heavy mantle of litter and humus.

This protection has been extended long enough for the soil fauna to become re-established, so that the soil gives beneath one's heels as he walks through the woods. Although the topography of the land is steeply rolling there is not enough run-off from the tract to sweep fallen leaves out of the drainageways. Since there is so little run-off, there is practically no erosion.

Senator Wilson's woodland has other good points, too. The amount of growing stock is perfect according to our present standards of woodland management. The distribution of tree sizes is such that, if it is desired, maximum annual harvests of the highest quality saw logs can be made from now on. There is an excellent balance between hardwoods and pine which provides high soil fertility and low insect and disease hazard.

The annual growth on the tract is 40,000 to 45,000 board feet of pine and about 18,000 board feet of mixed hardwoods worth anywhere from \$325 to \$500 on the stump, depending on careful marketing.

This yield cannot only be maintained, it can be increased gradually by more than a third if the woodland management plans drafted for operation of this woods is carefully followed. Judicious use of the axe in cutting material for home consumption will systematically substitute good trees for poor ones, four-log trees for one-log trees, sound trees for defective ones and merchantable species for the unmerchantable.

With cost of production somewhere between 12 and 15 cents per acre per year, is it good business for the Senator to maintain 64 percent of his farm in woodland? The Senator probably has already figured that out.



## INCREASE WOODLAND INCOME BY MANAGEMENT

By James M. Case, Forester,  
Arkansas Coastal Plains Area

In addition to controlling erosion, careful management will make it possible for the operator to double the income from his woods, according to Bert Kieth, manager for the Union Sawmill Company, Patmos, Arkansas.

"My company will pay an average of \$2.00 per thousand board feet more for pine timber if it is marked to be cut selectively according to woodland management plans worked out by the farmer with the assistance of technicians of the Soil Conservation Service," Mr. Kieth said recently. "The higher price is due to the lower costs of handling only large trees and to the higher quality of timber obtained from such trees."

Mr. Kieth made a specific offer of \$5.50 per thousand board feet stumpage for the selectively marked timber on the woodland of one farmer in the Hope project area who has installed a complete soil and water conservation program on his land.

This same stand of timber, if cut to a diameter limit of ten inches, would bring only \$3.00 to \$3.50 per thousand board feet stumpage.

This illustrates the economic advantage of logging selectively on an annual basis or a five-year cutting cycle instead of cutting all trees ten inches or more in diameter.

If cut to ten inches it would take this stand approximately thirty years to grow back to the condition it is in at the present time. The owner's income for this period would average approximately \$0.86 per acre per year. If cut selectively on a sustained yield basis each five years, it would average approximately \$2.49 per acre per year during the same thirty-year period.

Mr. Kieth also stated that his company would pay approximately \$2.00 per thousand board feet more than the stumpage price for trees cut into sawlog lengths and dragged to the roadside by the owner. This enables the owner to receive additional income for his labor.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE  
OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL CONSERVATOR  
REGION 4

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